RAGGED SCHOOL UNION QUARTERLY RECORD.

JANUARY, 1878.

RISE, PROGRESS, AND RESULTS OF THE RAGGED SCHOOL SHOEBLACK SOCIETIES.

On November 28th, 1850, exactly twenty-seven years ago this day, Delegates from Ragged Schools held a meeting at Field Lane schoolroom, lent for the purpose, with the Earl of Shaftesbury (then Lord Ashley) in the chair, to consider means by which boys might get new employment when the "Great Exhibition of 1851" would bring thousands of foreigners to London.

Three Ragged School teachers* on their way home from the meeting crossed over Holborn arm-in-arm, when a bright thought flashed, which has lighted up thousands of careworn faces since, and has gladdened many a heart and home. "Why not make some of our boys into shoeblacks for the foreigners to employ in the streets as I have often seen in Paris?" Quickly the thought ripened into action, and before we had crossed the street each of us had promised ten shillings to begin with.

In the dusk of next morning I got a little slip of paper printed, and 500 copies went out with the December number of the Ragged School Union Magazine. Five lines on the paper explained the design and asked for help, but not one solitary word came back of cheer or contribution. Next day at a meeting for another purpose, where Lord Ashley was in the chair, this slip of paper was put before him, and his approval was prompt and kind. Contributions soon flowed in, many rich people gave (one shilling each!), and a committee was formed, which has existed all the years since, and it never had a chairman, and never had a dispute, though most of the members were barristers.

* Messrs. R. J. Snape, J. R. Fowler, and J. MacGregor.

On January 19th, 1851, being thoroughly organised, the Ragged School Shoeblack Society came before a public meeting in Field Lane schoolroom, when the late Captain Trotter presided, and a boy with a shoeblack box showed how the work was to be done. The lad was nervous, though he had been an expert thief; also his box was three feet long and clumsy. His dress, too, was singular, a jersey of bright red; for the advocates of a sombre hue had been outvoted, and everybody now can see they were mistaken. More boys were soon selected from various Ragged Schools, and their "badges," each with the Society's name and a distinctive number, were worked by a sister of one of the Committee, who also presented the well-known red silk pennon which (surmounted by an empty blacking-pot) still heads our boys' procession at their annual treats.

On February 24th we hired rooms for 2*s.* 6*d.* a week at Off Alley, now called York Place, a very shabby but central spot near John Street, in the Strand; and there we taught the lads to polish boots by frequent practice on the feet of the committee-men, who ran out now and then to get a splash of mud in the street puddles.

But soon a manager was wanted for the work, and one day while the Committee were engaged in prayer to God on this subject a man knocked at the door. He was speedily appointed, and he worked with zeal and success for nineteen years, while his wife and daughter helped in various ways. Five boys were soon ready, and on March 31st, 1851, two marched out with an escort of the Committee, one boy to the corner of the National Gallery, and the other to Leicester Square. A crowd soon followed each of the red-coats, and, having planted the first near the corner now occupied by Mr. Watherston's jeweller's shop, I placed my foot on the shoeblack's box, and the people pressed round, and the boy began, and the police came up, and then the whole arrangement was instantly swept into space—a complete *fiasco!*

We ran off next to the other boy in Leicester Square, and here let us quote from "Shoeblacks and Broomers," a pamphlet issued in 1852:—

"Oh, I was very anxious to see whether anybody would employ the shoeblack; and glad indeed was I to observe a good, honest, fat-sided Englishman approach the little boy and place his great boot upon the top of his box. The boy touched his cap, set to

work upon his knees, smartly brushed the mud from the man's trousers, turned them carefully up, attacked the muddy leather with vigour, and soon made it a yellow-grey—then he applied the blacking, and briskly plied 'the polisher' until the boot was bright. So was the other foot finished; the man paid his penny; the boy touched his cap again, and the work was done.

Another, and another, and another came, and paid and went. First a clerk, wishing to show off at his office—then a milliner-girl who had spattered her thin shoes—next a burly farmer striding along in his huge top boots—a fish-wife next—a whiskered foreigner—and then a peer of the realm. The shoeblacks that day obtained a footing in London.

More boys soon went out, as their stations were allowed by the police. The brigade enlisted recruits, and the red regiment invaded the Strand, seized upon Piccadilly, invested Regent Street, threw out skirmishers along Holborn, garrisoned the bridges, and at last marched upon the Park.

Here they found another set of shoeblacks commanded by a Frenchman. The boys quarrelled and fought, and the English retired from the field in good order.

But the police complained of the French boys as a nuisance; —they loitered about and left their posts, until at last they so annoyed the public and imposed upon their customers that they were banished from Hyde Park, and our red-coats rushed in to take their place.

Old ladies used to put strange questions to the lonely shoeblacks, and told them they would all become Lord Mayors. Idle boys laughed at them, twitched their aprons, and threw flour into their boxes. Foreigners gave them odd-looking coins, which they could not change. Costermongers called them 'Young Cardinals' and 'Red Republicans.' Once half-a-crown was given by mistake for a penny; but the boy was honest, and ran after the gentleman and returned it. Another customer gave a sovereign, without noticing it, between two halfpennies; but this boy, too, was honest, and after some hours' searching, discovered who had given it to him, and was rewarded for his trouble by 'thank you.'

Shabby people employed the boys, and said, 'I'll pay you another day;' and one old pensioner on a wooden leg gave a half-penny as payment for polishing his only boot.

Kind nods of approbation were bestowed upon the shoeblacks,

and many a word of encouragement spoken to cheer their hearts. Shopkeepers took a fancy to the boys, and gave them dinners. Ladies feasted them in their houses, or called them up to the carriage-windows to give them a sixpence.

Boots and shoes were regularly brought out from private houses to be cleaned. Large establishments employed the boys; and in one case, where 500 shoes had to be cleaned in a hurry, we sent off a cab-load of shoeblacks to do the work.

One little boy in the country collected from 300 other children a halfpenny each.

In the bright summer morning you might see the little shoeblacks merry as larks, hurrying along the streets to be in time for their meeting at the Society's rooms, near Charing Cross. One of them bought a hoop "to make him run fast;" and a good many who live at a distance come to their work in the halfpenny steamers.

Then at seven o'clock they all assemble in their red jerseys, and the Superintendent reads a portion of the Bible and prays with his young company. (Do *you* begin every day by feeding on the word of life and asking for heavenly blessings?)

Each then puts on his black apron, shoulders his box, and marches to his allotted station; but he remains only three days at one post, in order that all may have a proper chance at those where most money is earned.

Soon afterwards he is visited by the Sub-inspector—a man with uniform like a policeman, who makes his rounds frequently during the day, and carries blacking to those boys who require it. Our first Sub-inspector was promoted from a shoeblack, and when he put on his uniform we found that he could not hold up his head. This was because he had a bullet still lodged in his neck, which had been fired at him when he was committing a burglary. P—— was his name, and he has gone to Australia.

Most of the work is done by these boys in the morning, and then they open the little flasks in which they have brought their breakfasts, and discuss their coffee.

They leave their posts at dusk, and bring all their earnings to Off Alley, where they receive sixpence at once out of what they bring home, and one third of what remains. Another third is put into their Banks for their future use, and the Society is supported by the remaining sum."

The Great Exhibition opened on May 1st, 1851, and by this time we had established regular relations with the police authorities, so that every "station" was assigned by them. This co-operation continued until it culminated in a deputation from the Society to Sir G. Cornewall Lewis, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, who kindly had inserted in an Act of Parliament "street shoeblacks" as functionaries to be regulated and protected by the police.

Our red jackets steadily increased in number, until on July 30th, 33 shoeblacks marched through the Exhibition, and then lunched in Hyde Park, sitting on the grass. On an average 25 boys were employed during the Exhibition time. They cleaned 101,000 pairs of shoes, for which the public paid them £500. In October, five of our boys emigrated to America, and seven years afterwards one of them jumped down into my arms from "his own carriage" in Toronto, and he was delighted to give me a long drive.

Here we may quote again from the same pamphlet:—

"Remember that these lads were not, and are not, such as you. One had been at the police office thirteen times:—the gaols had been the homes of many. The struggle for life and comfort had been short and severe, despair had laid hold of their minds, and squalid poverty of their bodies. The histories of the 90 boys employed by the Society would contain wondrous tales; and if reformation is worked in such characters, it is only because God has been dealing with them.

"Leaving their implements and uniforms, the shoeblacks go to their evening Ragged Schools; or if it is a Wednesday, remain at Off Alley to hear an affectionate and interesting address from one of the Committee. I am certain that in no school in the whole world could you find greater attention and order than you might see with us on such occasions. But little wonder:—the boys know how much love is felt for them by those who manage their affairs—how great is the anxiety of each member of the Committee that every shoeblack should become a Christian boy.

"Gala-days have happened and passed off well. One of these was a parting with the emigrants; and the visit to the Exhibition was an event never to be forgotten. Not a corner was left on that occasion in which any boy could stow away more cake and milk; but still there was a youngster who finished his repast by

standing on his head upon the green grass, for he had been a 'tumbler.'"

In November, when the bad weather lowered our receipts, because on wet days people put up with spattered shoes, we tried a new plan, and twenty "Broomers" marched into Regent Street and Bond Street. Each took the pavement of twenty shops, and we paid them each twenty pence a day, while most of the shopkeepers readily subscribed their 6*d.* a week to have the flags kept kept perfectly clean from mud, and watered in dusty weather.

We paid the boys about £90, and the shops repaid us £87. But shoeblack work was far more remunerative than sweeping pavements, and the experiment of "Broomers" has not been repeated.*

Another set of our boys was employed as *Messengers*. These were all responsible lads, with at least £3 in their "banks," and they carried messages for twopence the first half-mile, and one penny for every additional half-mile. The Society was responsible for loss of parcels, &c., to the amount of £3 in each case. This experiment, too, was abandoned because shoeblacking was found more suitable; but it was the precursor of the admirable corps of Commissionaires, now so well managed by Captain Walter.

After a large conference on the reformatory question, held at Birmingham, the "Preventive and Reformatory School Committee" was formed in 1851, and in January, 1852, the heads of a Bill as to the necessary treatment of young offenders were prepared by the late Recorder of Ipswich and the present writer. The matter was then referred to a committee by the House of Commons, and in the evidence before this committee the shoeblack societies were fully described. Thus public attention was further directed to the subject, and many similar societies sprang up in Dublin, Newcastle, Glasgow, Liverpool, Brighton, Bristol, Edinburgh, Leeds, &c., besides seven or eight societies in London quite independent of the original body, and most of them rapidly collapsed,

* For the girls some kind ladies started a corps of "Steppers" to clean the doorsteps in the squares, but after a proper trial this also was abandoned.

An effort was made at Brighton to organise crossing sweepers into a "brigade." They had uniform and assigned posts, and they were forbidden to ask for money, but a box was placed on a lamp-post near each crossing to receive voluntary contributions.

In Dublin a corps of boys was organised to clean knives and shoes, &c., at private houses, but this endeavour failed, because all the houses wanted their work done only in the mornings.

but the offshoots in London which were worked on proper principles succeeded well.

One of the separate societies not already mentioned was intended for Roman Catholic boys, being originated by persons connected with the "Society of St. Vincent de Paul." Their official badges bear the letters S.V.P., which letters (say some of the other boys), mean "salt, vinegar, and pepper," but the wearers said that their meaning was "shoes 'vell polished."

We had opened a dormitory at Off Alley this year for 12 boys who had no suitable homes to shelter them. This adjunct to our work entailed additional management, but the plan was found successful, and almost necessary, and it has been developed gradually, until now the "Old Reds" have a spacious floor accommodating 30 lads, and ample offices in their own house.

From the first this Shoeblack project had been begun with prayer, and every day since the boys have met in the early morn to ask the blessing of God on their work and for themselves during the day. In relation to this subject let me say that in thirty years of experience of London life among boys, I have not known one single instance of the continued success of any project for their benefit which has not definitely acknowledged the heart and soul of the boy to be the mainspring which ought to be influenced, and the grace of God through Jesus Christ as the only power which can change the heart and bless the life in time and for eternity.

The presence of a member of the Committee on such occasions at "family worship" is a sanction and encouragement to the boys, and it was my privilege for some years—when the Society moved to Mac's Place, near the Temple—to lead the morning service of the hundred bright-faced boys, in their neat red uniform, and eager for honest work at 8 o'clock in the morning.

The boys to be dealt with by such agencies are various in kind. So of the 117 boys who had been "through" the Central Shoeblack Society in 1852, 27 were "criminals," 29 "wholly destitute," while 42 remaining were still employed.*

* One of our boys, A. B., was at first a crossing sweeper at St. Martin's Church, bare-footed and bare-headed, but with a mass of unkempt sandy hair, as if an old door-mat had been casually thrown at his head. In one week's work at the Exhibition with his brush and box he earned two guineas. The last time I met him was on the platform at a school meeting. He was "dressed" as a gentleman, and had his "silk umbrella," and his fond mother said, "My boy has made me a lady, sir."

For the first time now a treat was given to the parents of our boys, and this was repeated every year for a long time. Then the boys in bright clothes, and each with a bouquet in his breast, sat opposite the poor thin, ragged, wan fathers and mothers, and gave them an ample repast, some vigorous songs, and sweeter hymns; and surely many hapless ones were glad that night in wretched homes.

The public press did ample justice to all these efforts for good, and *Punch* took it in hand in 1854, when his main picture represented a British nobleman as a shoeblack performing on the high jack-boots of the Emperor Nicholas, with the legend in print below, "Not a nice business."

In 1856 our headquarters were removed to Maiden Lane, near Covent Garden, and next year to Ship Yard, near Temple Bar, not a very fashionable quarter, for I recollect practising there with hideous noises while learning to be bugler of the London Scottish Volunteers. It was in 1857 that the Islington Shoeblack Society was established by that indefatigable Christian gentleman, Mr. Tabrum, whose work among boys of a better class was already enough to occupy all his energies, and when he afterwards added his work as a member of the School Board, his health broke down, and he died, to the deep regret of many thousand friends.

The death of Assistant-Judge Joseph Payne was also a sad event for the Society. His quaint verses, full of religious fervour, had enlivened our meetings for many years.

In 1858 the Lord Mayor gave a splendid "treat" to the Blacking Brigade, and several other rich folks encouraged us in this way at other times, for the Old Reds have annually a summer treat and a winter tea-party; and when we go by steamer to Herne Bay or Erith, the only two rules enforced are these: "No boy may spend more than 2*s.* 6*d.* upon donkey riding," and "Not more than four boys may be on the same donkey at the same time."

Drum-and-fife bands are excellent adjuncts to our various Societies, and military drill, yet some of our Peace Society friends decry military accomplishments, while enjoying all the time the property and the liberties which they are content that others should fight for and protect.

Swimming also is essentially a shoeblack pastime in summer,

even if it is enjoyed to a surfeit, when the boys stop in the bath for more than two hours at a time!

With 1862 came another "Universal Exhibition," and an effort was made to establish "Shoeblack Saloons," where the black art could be carried on indoors, but the project failed. At this time 1,200 boys had passed through the Red Society alone, and their united earnings had been £11,000.

This Society had then been for some time "self-supporting," and it was probably the only organisation for poor boys which had ever attained this financial position while training and sending into life the very boys who by their energy contributed most to its support. In this year the City of London instituted licences for shoeblack boys, and fixed their stations in a regular method.

In 1865 the streets were crowded by "newspaper boys," a novel invasion, a nuisance to pedestrians, and demoralising to the boys. Plans by way of remedy for this were soon suggested by one who had seen 300 newspaper boys excellently managed in Philadelphia, but the faint trial of these failed in London. Yet I am sure it would succeed if properly managed, and the benefit to the boys and the advantage to the public would be important. The seven London Shoeblack Societies followed the same plan of apportioning the earnings for the boys' pockets, for their "banks," and for the expenses of management, while the "fines" for small offences went to the Sick Fund. Other modes of distribution were tried elsewhere, as in Liverpool, where the boys paid a fixed "rent" for each box and station, and 264 boys being admitted, no fewer than 187 "left of their own accord" in one year! A short trial of a similar system made by the Red Society in London resulted in failure. Nevertheless, the plan, somewhat modified, is now adopted by some societies. And here it may be remarked that by "Red Society" we mean the one original Society, and not others which may be mistaken for the central body.*

* In June, 1875, after a conference arranged by the "Reformatory and Refuge Union" between managers of various Shoeblack Societies in London, a "Shoeblack's Beadle" was appointed to look after all the boys, to prevent those expelled as unfit from one Society from entering another without warning, to aid the proper transfer of boys, to secure situations on shore or at sea for those who were suitable, to visit the Societies' Homes, and the boys at their stations, and to be a medium of communication and co-operation between the separate corps of boys, which includes, for this purpose, not only the nine Societies mentioned in our list, but that of St. Vincent de

The Volunteer Camp at Wimbledon is favoured by an annual visit from some of the Shoeblacks, who occupy several tents, and earn much money by much work. A squad of boys went on a similar errand to Dover, when the volunteer review was held there, and when the late Dean of Canterbury preached a most impressive sermon to 1,000 volunteers of different corps in the cathedral. Numerous smaller excursions of a similar character have varied the scene of our labours with the brush.

In 1868 we determined to have a building for our "very own." Lord Shaftesbury,* who has always helped us well, presided at a lecture by one of the Committee, and about £30 of the proceeds went to the fund for the Shoeblacks' house. The sum of about £1,600 was contributed from the funds of the Society itself (saved from its share of the earnings). Then about £1,700 was specially contributed by the friends of the poor boys in London; and £200 still remains as a debt; but I do not feel it right to *ask* here for help in this matter *on the present occasion*, yet we shall not reject it if the kind offer be made.† So the land was bought, and the premises were built, which the Old Reds have occupied since 1874, at Saffron Hill, near the Farringdon Street station of the Underground Railway. Come and see that place at 5-7 o'clock in a winter's evening, and judge for yourselves of its utility.‡

Once we had a rule that every boy, before leaving us, had his photograph taken by the Society, and a copy of it was given to himself. Some boys actually gave notice to leave the Society in

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Paul and two other Societies not already alluded to, and whose earnings are not included in our account. Boys employed as Shoeblacks near stations of the Underground Railway, and who have no "badges" on their uniforms, do not belong to the Societies.

* Our frontispiece represents in miniature a well-known picture of two boys, one of them a Shoeblack, the other his ragged friend, and they are looking at the window of Mr. Graves's well-known shop in Pall Mall, where they see the engraving of an excellent portrait of the Earl of Shaftesbury, which is published here by the kind permission of Mr. Graves.

The second woodcut is from "Evening Hours," by the permission of Messrs. Strachan and Co., and herein we see boys at work, and one going home, and a Shoeblack Inspector on his round of duty.

† Mr. C. Slater, 8, Russell Square, is our Treasurer.

‡ As to the practical management of a Shoeblack Society by the Inspector and other executive officers, much interesting information and useful advice will be found in the "Prize Essay," by Mr. Scarfe on this subject, published by the "Reformatory and Refuge Union."

order that they might get their own pictures! And here we may ask, what becomes of these lads who leave us, many of them with £20 or £30 of capital, one with even £60, saved up. This part of our history is too long to give here in detail, but in general the boys turn out well, and many of them are eminently successful.

Not long ago a handsome man, fashionably dressed, called on me, and said: "I have come to see you, sir. I was a shoeblack; now I am chief agent of the —— Company, at New York, and sometimes I carry a million dollars for them. My salary is £500 a year, and I have *such* a splendid wife." He recognised with great delight the photographs of former shoeblacks in my room, and then (after a brief time of prayer with me) he passed on his way as only one of a number who had brushed aside the obstacles and mounted the ladder of success. But of course there have been frequent failures, when even good boys of the Society have ended in shame.

It was among members of the Ragged School Union Committee that the Shoeblack movement began,* and, ever since, the Union has nurtured the work in its wonderful progress. The vast educational effort of these latter years has very much altered the condition of the poorest children, and the nature of the change is thus estimated by the experienced Hon. Secretary of the "Reds," Mr. Martin Ware (one of the Committee from the beginning), who says: "Originally there was very little opportunity for ragged boys to get an honest or *quasi*-honest living in the streets; there were no shoeblacks or newsboys, very few 'fuzee boys.' Every street boy was then made to 'move on' by the police, and the boys attending Ragged Schools were obliged either to be errand boys (which was difficult with ragged clothes and no character) or to be beggars or thieves.

"Consequently we were at first supplied with a stream of well-conducted boys from Ragged Schools, who were thankful to use our Society as a stepping-stone to get into respectable work. But now it is so easy for a ragged boy to get his living in the streets as a shoeblack or newsboy, &c., and moreover the demand for boys in the labour market is so much greater than it was twenty years ago that boys are less eager to get into the Society, and less

* Eleven of the present or former members of the Committee of the Red Shoeblack Society were, at one time or another, on the Committee of the Ragged School Union.

willing to submit to the discipline when in it. On the whole, they are decidedly a rougher lot of boys than we used to get, and a much larger proportion of them are homeless boys.

"Many people would say that this is as it should be, and that we ought to take the roughest and most destitute by preference. But it certainly makes the Society more difficult to manage, and requires a certain change of front in the management.

"The case may be put thus: Originally our object was to provide work for those who were being trained at Ragged Schools. *Now* our object is to provide discipline and instruction for those who are getting their living in the streets, and who, but for our Societies, would have no instruction or control at all. One result of this is that all the Societies find it necessary to have homes for homeless boys, and a Sunday School, as well as regular week evening instruction at the Society's premises." . . . "Although the mode of action of the Society is in some measure changed, its power of usefulness is still very great and important. Just think of the number of boys who pass through our hands in one year!

"All of these, for the time being, are on friendly terms with us, and open to good influence, and in the majority of cases open to *no other* good influence."

Here, then, we have to close this imperfect account of a work which has employed some thousands of poor boys, who have earned about £180,000 by blacking shoes in the streets of London.

The lads themselves have been dispersed to all parts of the world by land and sea. The good that has been wrought for their lasting interests will never be known "until that day."

ROB ROY.

December, 1877.

THE SHOEBLACK SOCIETIES, 1877.

From the Ragged School Union Report.

Name of Shoeblack Society.	When established.	Colour of Uniform.	Number of Boys employed.	Earned in 1876. £ s. d.	In Bank at Christmas 1876. £ s. d.	Address of Offices and Superintendents.
Central	Mar. 31, 1851	Red	69	2798 13 11*	147 5 0	Saffron Hill, E.C. Mr. Nichols.
East London ..	July 31, 1851	Blue	48	1781 4 10	58 17 3	96, Mansell Street, E. Mr. W. Tourell.
South London	Nov. 22, 1854	Red	27	864 0 7	80 7 5	223, High Street, Borough, S.E. W. E. Chandler.
North-Western	May 23, 1857	Red, with Black Facings	60	1094 14 11	102 0 3	241, Marylebone Road, N.W. Mr. F. W. Scarfe.
West London..	June 2, 1857	Purple and Scarlet Facings.	60	1725 3 9	35 5 6	57, Bessborough Place, S.W. Mr. Tatton.
Islington and N. London	Oct. 26, 1857	Brown, Red Facings.	50	1757 13 5	63 5 8	15, York Road, N. Mr. Charles Shepard.
Union Jack ..	1858	Blue	22	382 0 5	4 9 10	18, Stepney Causeway, E. Mr. S. W. Turpin.
Notting Hill ..	1869	Blue with White Braid.	23	684 5 0	—	Shaftesbury Hall, Princes Road, W. Mr. Tuck.
Tower Hamlets	1873	Blue with Red Facings	26	375 0 0	5 0 0	Tollett Street, E. Mr. E. H. Kerwin.
			385	12,062 17 4	496 10 11	

	No. of Boys.	Earned.		No. of Boys.	Earned
For the year 1851	36	£650	For the year 1865	313	£7,002
,, 1852	37	760	,, 1866	329	7,502
,, 1853	37	899	,, 1867	355	7,838
,, 1854	95	1,443	,, 1868	377	8,830
,, 1855	108	2,270	,, 1869	378	10,004
,, 1856	132	2,981	,, 1870	368	10,196
,, 1857	299	3,227	,, 1871	362	11,003
,, 1858	326	4,308	,, 1872	384	11,742
,, 1859	319	4,548	,, 1873	337	11,880
,, 1860	331	4,647	,, 1874	368	11,001
,, 1861	362	4,665	,, 1875	373	11,658
,, 1862	372	6,222	,, 1876	385	12,062
,, 1863	335	6,423			
,, 1864	286	6,563		7404	£170,324

* The amount earned by the Reds should be £2,767 1s. 9d. The figures inserted are those of the year 1876. The year of the Central Society ends in March, but the others generally in December. The total at the end of 1877 may be estimated as at least equal to that of any other year.

ARABS OF THE CANAL.

THIS first day of January, 1878, is the one fixed for the Canal Boats Act, 1877, to come into operation, and its provisions are to be enforced from 1st January, 1879. This Act is the outcome of the efforts of Mr. George Smith, of Coalville, in relation to the canal population. The philanthropic labours of the same gentleman are well known in relation to the brickfield labourers, and which resulted in the Brickfield Act passed in 1871. "The nation," says the *Weekly Times*, "is indebted to this gentleman for both Acts, because he alone has inquired into the state and condition of the men, women, and children engaged in both works, and by his persevering tact the information obtained was disseminated through the length and breadth of England, and a demand arose for an alteration in favour of the classes interested, and Parliament passed the necessary Acts. In both cases Mr. Smith's sympathies were first enlisted because of the sufferings of the children who were employed. The secret of his sympathy is soon explained, for Mr. Smith, with a candour which does credit to his heart, tells us that, from his third to his seventh year, he worked himself in a brickfield, learning the simple mysteries of brickmaking. It is to the sufferings he endured during those years that 10,000 little children owed their release from the brickmaking slavery in January, 1872. Such a work was enough to satisfy any ordinary man's longing to serve his day and generation; but Mr. Smith is no ordinary man, and, having released the children from brickmaking, he turned his attention to another class, whose relations with brickfields and brickmakers first inspired him with an interest in their circumstances. These were the workers of the canal-boats, by whose means the major portion of bricks are conveyed from the country fields to the towns and cities for use. There were even fewer difficulties to be surmounted in acquainting the public with the sorrows and troubles of the brickfield workers than had to be encountered amongst the floating population of our canals. There are nearly 5,000 miles of canals and rivers in England traversed by canal boats, and upwards of 100,000 men, women, and children spend their whole lives upon the canals. No Act of Parliament has hitherto condescended to take the least notice of this class of people. Their whole life is spent in the boat, steering; on the canal-bank, driving or hauling; about the stable when the journey is ended, or loading and unloading. A canal boatman has no parish, is reckoned in no "cure of souls;" the overseer and the tax-collector are unknown to him, no Board reports upon the sanitary condition of his boat, or the cubic feet of space each human being enjoys, and no educational inspector has the least interest in

finding out whether the little ones are growing up like wild asses or receiving some sort of educational training."

These people, it has been clearly established, number about 100,000 men, women, and children, and they are in a state of wretchedness, misery, and poverty. Not five per cent. of the whole can read and write; and nine out of ten of the men are drunkards—they buy rum by pints and drink it like water. One boatman, who has worked between the Potteries, Birmingham, and London during the past forty years, does not know half a dozen boaters who are members of a Christian church. He further says that two parts out of three of the men and women living as husbands and wives are unmarried. A governor of one of our large gaols states that they are the worst class of criminals he has to do with. Many of the boats carry not more than twenty-five tons. The cabin is scarcely the size of a gentleman's dog kennel, into which are stowed, or huddled together, man, woman, and six or seven children of both sexes, to live, sleep, and die in. Mr. Smith advocates the entire prohibition of women and children living and working on canal boats. The work can be done cheaper without them. The men would become more sober and industrious if "the women and children were out of the way." The evidence given before the commission, and in Mr. Baker's report, backed up this statement. The Royal Commission recommended that no child above the age of three, and no female under sixteen, shall be allowed to reside in a canal boat. This will accomplish to a large extent, in the long run, the education and protection of the women and children living and working on canal boats. The Education Act had a damaging effect on the better class of boatmen, who had homes on land; it gave the boatman an open door through which to escape the compulsory clauses of the Education Act. All he had to do was to give up his house, and live with his children in the cabin, to avoid being compelled to educate his children. All this is corrected by

The Canal Boat Act 1877.

All canal boats, barges, or flats must now be registered, marked, and numbered in a prominent place by their owners, stating which place the boat is registered as belonging to, before they can be used as dwellings.

Certificates of registration, fixing the number of persons allowed to dwell in a canal boat, barge, or flat, will be obtainable of the officer of registration, for which a small fee will be charged. The boats will not be allowed to carry about infectious diseases, and provision will have to be made by the owner for proper ventilation and the separation of the sexes, and the boats will have frequently to be thoroughly

cleaned, painted, and rendered habitable. Any person duly authorised by the proper authorities will have power to enter these boats and detain them until all the law requires is carried out, and the master of the boats shall, if requested by the officer, produce to him the certificate of his registry. Children living in a canal boat, barge, or flat are to be subject to the compulsory clauses of the Education Act which are in force at the place at which the boat is registered as belonging to, and they will be treated in every respect as children of other working classes are, and not thrust into a corner without question being put to them, as has been the case in some instances hitherto. Power is given to canal companies or associations to appropriate any portion of their funds or the establishment or maintenance of schools wherein the children living in canal boats may be lodged, maintained, and educated. The master and also the owner of a canal boat, barge, or flat shall each be liable for a fine of twenty shillings for each time the boat is used as a dwelling contrary to what the Act requires. Any person obstructing an officer in the performance of his duty shall be liable to a fine of forty shillings. The master of any canal boat, barge, or flat, shall be liable to a fine of forty shillings if he illegally detains the certificate of registry of such boat; part of such fine may be paid to the person injured by the detention of such certificate. The Act does not extend to Ireland or Scotland.

On the subject of the canal boats and their bargemen the special commissioner of the *Standard* has specially reported. He says:—

"I have arrived at the following general conclusions in the way of a summary of the experiences of my canal-boat journey:—First, that a great difference exists in the social condition of the boat-people on different canals; secondly, that the Canal Boats Act is received with favour by bargeowners, boat-people, and canal companies alike; and, thirdly, that there will not be such difficulty in carrying the Act into operation as might at first appear. My own observation leads me to consider that the condition of the boatwomen and children, the accommodation on board the barges, their cleanliness, and the habits of the boatmen themselves, are altogether worse in this district than nearer London. I saw nothing nearly so offensive to the eye in the course of my journey down the Grand Junction Canal as I met with in my walk on the canal-side at Runcorn, and more recently on the banks of the Trent and Mersey Canal, in the vicinity of Burslem. This may be accounted for, however, by the fact that the boats congregated about these places are as a rule coal boats, and therefore more difficult to be kept clean and neat in the cabins than boats carrying general merchandise, timber, and hay. These latter are mostly to be met with on the canals running through Worcestershire and Hereford-

shire, and the Grand Junction Canal, on many sections of which the country passed through is open and attractive, and altogether void of that dense smoky atmosphere common to the manufacturing districts. For all this, however, there is much that needs looking into on the canals of North and South Staffordshire. It is in these districts and at Wigan, in Lancashire, that the authorities will find the most work to do in connection with the Canal Boats Act, and it is to be hoped that they will show themselves most energetic in carrying its principal and, I may add, excellent provisions into effect. They will have to cope with the most fearful ignorance, the result, unfortunately, of too long neglect of the condition of our canal population; and, it may be, they will at first encounter resistance and obstacles to their work on the part of the canal boat-people. I have pointed out where, in my opinion, and in the opinion of others with whom I have conversed, the main difficulty will be found. If the labour, or rather wages, question did not crop up in the matter, it would be, comparatively speaking, plain sailing in carrying the various clauses of the Act into operation; but, as it is, the wages question is in fact the one great hinge on which everything seems to turn. Once let this be adjusted satisfactorily, and I venture to say that the boatmen and women both will welcome with more than gladness the efforts at present being made by the Government to improve their condition. I may say—and I do so with the utmost pleasure—that from first to last during my journey I have met with nothing but an anxious desire on the part of owners of boats and agents of canal companies to furnish me every facility towards making my inquiry as searching and complete as possible. And although I have ventured to bespeak attention for this "wages-question" element, as being one which has met me at every turn I have taken, it is not to be understood that I foreshadow the slightest opposition from either owners of barges or canal proprietors to the just settlement of the fair demands of the men when the proper time arrives.

"I have been curious to ascertain some statistical particulars of the population on the Bridgewater Canal. Mr. Beddows, the company's agent at Runcorn, has been good enough to give me the following information:—At present his company (the Bridgewater Navigation Company) owns 335 boats. Employed in these are 662 men, of whom 422 are married, and the remainder unmarried. Only six women are employed in any capacity on board the boats of the company, and among the total number of boat-people in their service but ten children are living on board any of their craft. More than three-fourths of the men can read and write, 105 are total abstainers, and 576 are proved to be sober boatmen. Of the whole number of men

and women 646 have a home on shore, and but 35 not. This seems to be a very satisfactory state of things, and if the "accommodation" on board the company's craft will bear as close inspection as the above-stated figures, the Bridgewater Canal proprietors have reason to congratulate themselves on the help they will be able to afford the Government. I am told, however, that the boatmen in the service of this company, as well as of other companies, are dreadfully deficient in sanitary knowledge. Recently a boat came into Runcorn with a boy ill from smallpox on board. The boy was landed among the barge-people on shore, and no steps whatever were taken to cleanse the boat's cabin, the result being that the disease was communicated to a second, and if I remember rightly, to a third person, one of whom died. There is little doubt that infectious disease may be propagated to an alarming extent by means of the canal boats. The fourth clause of the Act, it is satisfactory to know, will deal efficiently with this evil."

In the next paragraph the commissioner touches on the treatment of canal horses, and then says:—"When I was at Runcorn I took the opportunity of visiting some of the cottages of the boat-people. The accommodation provided was decent and fairly good, and generally consisted of two rooms and a washhouse. For this a rent of 3s. 6d. a week was paid. The tenants, who were generally well supplied with children, lived without exception in the boats on the 'voyages,' and whilst away locked up the cottages. I mention this because it shows that even at present some of the boat-people find no difficulty in maintaining a place on shore. On the other hand, it must not be lost sight of that the wife counts as one hand in working the boats—I am referring more particularly now to what are known as the 'narrow' boats. When the wife has to live wholly on shore, as will probably be the case when the Canal Boats Act comes into operation, there will be so much taken away from joint earnings of husband and wife, with an added expense for an additional hand hired to take the woman's place. This point will have to be carefully considered. Personally I should prefer to see the women with their husbands in the boats—narrow, broad, or flat. I believe that the wives in most cases exercise an influence for good over their husbands—keep them from spending all their earnings at the beershop, endeavour to make the cabins, according to their lights, tidy and comfortable, and generally are useful in many ways. The exception proves the rule; and though I have pointed out many things which need remedying, I should be sorry, very sorry indeed, to see the women compelled by force of circumstances to live out of the 'narrow' boats, which are the boats likely to be most affected by the working

of the Act. The uninitiated may care to know that the 'narrow' boats are those ordinarily to be seen on the Grand Junction Canal with the brilliantly painted little cabins aft; the 'broad' boats are the dumpy-looking red and black barges, pretty much the same as those plying on the Thames; and the 'flats' carry a mainsail, and are built after the fashion of the bluff-bowed Dutch craft of the Scheldt. It seems to me that the cabins of the narrow boats might with comfort furnish accommodation for a man and his wife with their children under four years of age. As far as the 'flats' and 'broad' boats are concerned, if fore cabins are provided, these might be reasonably allowed to carry four persons on each boat.

"The principal centres that in my opinion will require most attention in carrying out the provisions of the Act will be, first and foremost, Wigan; Paddington, on the Grand Junction Canal; Birmingham, on the Birmingham and Warwick Canal; Etruria, as being the most central town on the Trent and Mersey Canal; Wolverhampton, on the Staffordshire and Worcester Canal; Manchester, the point of junction of the Bridgewater, Rochdale, Ashton, and Peak Forest Canals; Runcorn, Leeds, Liverpool, Blackburn, Coventry, Oxford, and Stafford, and one or two other places. It might be desirable to establish at some of these principal centres homes and schools combined for the accommodation of children during the absence of parents on their "voyages;" and it would possibly become a question for consideration whether the Government might not contribute to some extent to the support of such school homes. In the cases where the boatmen's families might be large it would be almost, indeed, I have no hesitation in saying quite, impossible for parents to pay out of their earnings what might be considered as the cost for maintaining and educating children between four and twelve years of age who are prohibited joining the boats. In the event of the Government finding itself in a position to contribute to the support of such schools, it would be a proviso, of course, that they should be reserved exclusively for the children of boat-people. If this could be brought to pass it would confer enormous benefit on our canal population, and would be of lasting advantage to the country at large.

"In conclusion, I may be permitted perhaps to add a few words on the religious aspect of the subject which has been engaging my attention for the past week. I am not prepared to admit that the barge-people are more destitute of advantages in the way of spiritual education than are their fellow-labourers of the world in the metropolitan, or, for the matter of that, any other districts in the kingdom. The boatmen and their wives have churches and chapels to go to, if they will but go, and mission agents and other excellent men are

always to be found willing to give them kindly advice and assistance. The fact is that in my mind it is just as useless trying to teach the Apache the Chinese alphabet as endeavouring to bring the bargees to church, so long as their earnings depend in any way upon the quickness of the voyages they have to make. I am not referring now altogether to the great centres or 'tying-up' places, but to the towns upon the canals generally. Pay the men weekly wages, and compel them to 'tie-up' on Sundays, and they will go to church and chapel the same, I take it, as other Christian people. But a man must be able to withstand a great amount of temptation if he will sit in the church aisle in his work-a-day shirt or dirty jacket sleeves, in preference to adding a shilling or two to the miserable weekly wages of himself, wife, and little ones. I am putting the matter in my own fashion. I am compelled also to say, judging from personal observation, that many statements that have been made concerning the bargees are altogether overdrawn. In their habits and manner of life many of them are bad enough; but not so bad as they have been painted. And were I a child of poor parents I would over and over again prefer to be the child of a Grand Junction Canal boatman than the child of a costermonger of Frying-pan Alley."

AN IRISH COLONY.

Nelson Street Ragged School and Mission.

As communities are made up of individuals, so the great missionary enterprise amongst our ragged poor has consisted of separate centres, each one conducted by its own staff of workers, grappling with its own local difficulties and surroundings, and having, in short, its own identity and history.

The movement has been consolidated by a "Union;" but it is both curious and interesting at times to view the schools singly—to trace back the work to its incipient beginnings, and to note their gradual development.

This is our purpose with respect to the long-sustained operations in Nelson Street, Camberwell; also to show that, notwithstanding the exertions of the past, there is urgent need for further effort.

The locality to the north of Wyndham Road, Camberwell, is intersected by narrow dirty streets—Nelson Street being one of them—lined with small houses. These are thickly tenanted by a costermonger class, nondescripts, and some of the labouring poor. In days gone by the neighbourhood was much worse than it is now. A teacher, writing to the "Leisure Hour," says:—"It appears to me

there's the same amount of mud and slush now as there was when we first began ragged operations. Certainly there are the same scrapers for us teachers to tumble over, and the same fag-ends of posts to knock our shins against. I suppose, too, we shall never get any lamps down Nelson Street; somehow or other it always happens when the "light" subject is broached, nobody seems inclined to pay the lighting rates; so we have to grope our way in darkness visible, tumbling over mud-heaps, scrapers, and babies, or grazing our knees against the postal inconveniences. Some of us carry lanterns down to the school—advantageous to us, no doubt, but more so to others, for it would do your eyes good to see what a procession is at once extemporised; all the 'tag-rag and bobtail' of the vicinity bound for the rendezvous, muster under the guidance of the lantern-leader, forming a cavalcade which would have done honour to Sancho Panza of Quixotic memory. The 'rough idea' was first taught by candlelight, which involved a periodical time for snuffing, and a consequent distraction from 'class duty.'" The same writer says:—"The physical appearance of our 'rags' is anything but prepossessing; they entertain a hydrophobic objection to water; boots and shoes are myths with many of them, whilst the attire is a nondescript collection of rags."

The earliest mention of "ragged" operations in this poverty-stricken district is contained in a lease now before us, dated 17th January, 1810, between William Hawkins, carpenter, of Camberwell, and Thomas Cranfield (of honoured memory in Sunday-school work), butcher, of Bermondsey Street, and George Medley, a hat-manufacturer, of Upper Thames Street, leasing all that building or schoolroom situate in Nelson Street, Windmill Lane, for 21 years, at a rental of 17*l*.

The late Mr. Douglas Allport's interesting "History of Camberwell" states that on the 29th of November, 1813, a school was formed under the title of the Royal British Free School, and opened on the 1st of January following in Nelson Street, Bowyer Lane—now Wyndham Road. The title was not unwarranted, for on June 10, 1817, H.R.H. the Duke of Sussex presided at the anniversary meeting. Owing to various causes the school sank into a state of inefficiency, from which it was redeemed by a public meeting held at the Grove House in 1832.

Yet another effort, entitled the "Bowyer Lane Infant School" was established in Nelson Street in 1826, and the fundamental principle of it was identical with the later Ragged School, viz., "that religious instruction be given to the children, adapted to their infant capacities, and founded on those doctrines of Christianity respecting which real Christians are agreed."

The next campaign against the prevailing ignorance dates from 1823, when a Sunday-evening School, struggling for existence and worked in a desultory way by a few local tradesmen, received an accession of Christian men whose youthful zeal and well-directed energy soon revived the drooping enterprise. To the Sunday School was soon added a Night School, which latter was conducted with the usual concomitants of mud-throwing, hooting, and other riotous tokens of hostility. At first the school was carried on in the two upper rooms of a cottage in Pitt Street close by; but the former school in Nelson Street being used only as a carpenter's shop, it was decided to secure it, and from that period to the present, in the old building and in the new, the spot has been consecrated to Ragged School and Mission purposes. A "Teachers' Appearance Book" of 1824 is extant containing the roll-call of these noble pioneers, many of whom are gone to their rest and reward; others happily remain, including the much-esteemed Mr. Franklin Allport, whose interest in Ragged and Sunday Schools is unabated, after more than fifty years' active experience therein.

Tracing as far as information admits these initial precursors of Ragged Schools, we come to 1849, when it was resolved to open a

Ragged School.

A few friends favourable to the scheme met at the residence of Mr. John Doulton, February 16, 1849, when a sub-committee was appointed to select a suitable building near to the Wyndham Road for the above purpose. The school in Nelson Street was secured and formally opened on Sunday evening, March 4, 1849, Mr. T. E. Crabb worthily acting as the superintendent as well as the hon. secretary. The attendance on the opening night was scholars 155, adults 30, teachers and friends 18, making a total of 203. Considerable activity was shown; new friends were found to join the committee and to strengthen the hands of the workers. A ladies' committee was formed, which did efficient service with the girls. The past records indicate a steady course of persistent labour for good. The operations gradually extended; to the Sunday School was added a Week Night School; then a Day School for free secular instruction, a Ragged Church, a Young Men's Class, a Mothers' Meeting, a Penny Bank, a Clothing Club, an Emigration Scheme, and a Lending Library.

The school was affiliated with the Ragged School Union, and help was also obtained from the British and Foreign School Society, and the Christian Instruction Society.

With varying changes and fluctuations the school continued; meanwhile other proceedings were taken.

The neighbourhood being essentially a Roman Catholic colony, an effort was made to supply it by means of a Mission commenced in a private house next the Ragged School, and ultimately transferred to a spacious school specially built in an adjoining street. This has largely attracted the Irish element around. A Mission School was also opened in Crown Street by the friends of Beresford Chapel, and still usefully continues.

The Nelson Street School premises were in a dilapidated state in 1870, and it was found necessary to rebuild them. This was done in a substantial manner at a cost of £300, and a lease of twenty-eight years was obtained from the landlord, at a moderate ground rental.

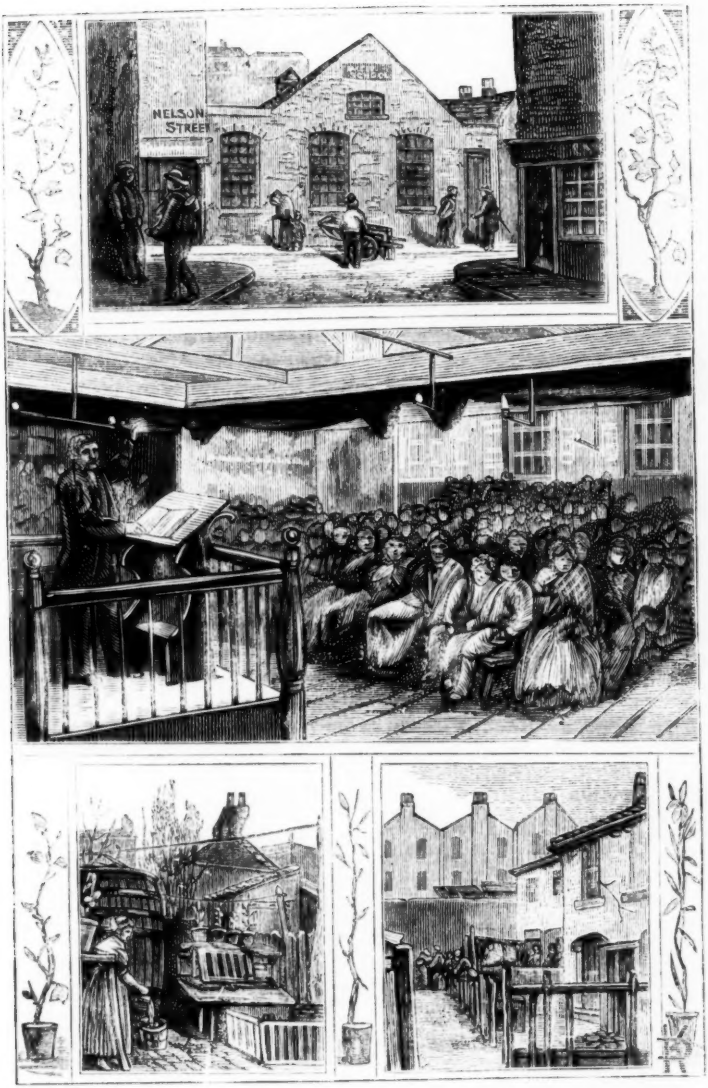
Our artist has given in the accompanying picture the outlines of the building; a small bell—rung on the voluntary principle by the first eager scholar—is in the little tower on the roof, and in the background is seen a towering floor-cloth factory.

The interior is depicted at one of the Popular Monday Evening Entertainments. It will hold over 200 people, and is well lighted. Two scenes are added below, but they convey but a faint idea of the abounding wretchedness and poverty.

It was found expedient in 1874 to transfer the Day School to the care of the School Board for London. Owing to a falling-off in subscriptions, and a decline of interest from various causes, the other operations dwindled down, and when the School Board vacated the building at Midsummer, 1877, and removed the children to a permanent building, there remained only the Sunday Morning and Evening Service and School—and the Tuesday Evening Meeting for the elder lads and young men, which latter was under the care of Mr. Farmer, the City Missionary. At this juncture Mr. Travers Buxton—whose earnest labours in connection with the school for more than twenty years as trustee, member of committee, superintendent, and secretary, merit the fullest recognition—had to leave the neighbourhood. The question then arose, Can and ought the school to be retained? to answer which a meeting of old and new friends was convened at the residence of Mr. J. G. Gent, when it was felt that the locality still needed such an influence under modified conditions. It was therefore resolved to re-form the committee, and to start on a new career of usefulness, with the honoured name of the Earl of Shaftesbury as president, Mr. A. F. Kinnaird as treasurer, and Mr. John Kirk as honorary secretary.

Steps were promply taken to reorganise the social and evangelistic agencies, and these may be briefly stated as under:—

Sunday, 11—12 a.m. . Children's Service.
" With an attendance of 80.
Mr. George Kirk, Conductor.


NELSON
STREET

Sunday 3—4 p.m. . Sunday School. Attendance 100.
Mr. John Kirk, Superintendent.
„ 6·30—8 p.m. . Sunday School. Attendance 130.
Mr. Beck, Superintendent.
Monday, 11 a.m. . . Clothing Club. Miss Whitley.
„ 8 p.m. . . . Lecture, or Musical Entertainment.

(These have been especially useful as a means for getting the people in and drawing them away from baneful attractions elsewhere.)

Tuesday, 3—4 p.m. . Mothers' Meeting.
Attendance 27. Miss Whitley, Superintendent.
„ 6.30—8 p.m. Men and Youths' Evening Classes.
Attendance 80. Messrs. Parker and Farmer, Superintendents.
Wednesday, 7 p.m. . Gospel Service.
Mr. John Barton, Conductor.
Thursday, 6.30—8 p.m. Men and Youths' Evening Classes.
Attendance 80. Messrs. Parker and Farmer, Superintendents.
Friday, 7—8 p.m. . . Temperance Society and Band of Hope.
Mr. Lemaitre, Superintendent.
Saturday, 7—8 p.m. . Penny Bank.
Mr. W. J. Turnpenny, Hon. Secretary.

Lending Library.
District Readings for the Poor, by Mr. J. Farmer.
Servants' Registry.

And the building is regularly used for Mission purposes by the City Missionary on the district.

The committee feel grateful to Almighty God for the measure of success which has been already vouchsafed. There have been disappointments and difficulties, but these are incident to every good work. The "ragged" have often been rough and tiresome. Promises from workers have been more prolific than performances. Advice has not been stinted, if personal help has sometimes failed, and the evangelistic efforts have been occasionally discouraging, but withal there is much for which we may thank God and take courage.

In conclusion, the committee would earnestly solicit pecuniary assistance in their work of faith and labour of love. The continuance of this war against vice, drunkenness, poverty, ignorance and sin, must

largely depend, as all wars are said to be governed, by the monetary supplies furnished by those who have at heart the temporal and spiritual interests of the poor. Considerable outlay has been incurred for fresh fittings, school furniture, and other necessities and alterations, to adapt the building to the new requirements. The funds collected have been absorbed, and the committee have the prospect of a balance due on the wrong side, in addition to other difficulties.

Representatives of most of the evangelical sections of the Christian Church cordially co-operate in this aggressive Christian work, and although every one cannot labour personally, all can help by their contributions, and by their prayers that God may continue to make Nelson Street Ragged School and Mission

"A light in a dark place."

*** Contributions will be gladly received by Mr. J. G. Gent, 1, Exeter Hall; by Mr. A. F. Kinnaird, the Treasurer, at Messrs. Ransom, Bouverie and Co.'s Bank, 2, Pall Mall East, S.W.; and by John Kirk, Hon. Secretary, 5, Bramah Road, Brixton, S.W.

THE LONDON SCHOOL BOARD AND THE RAGGED SCHOOL CHILDREN.

For some weeks a proposition by the Rev. J. J. Coxhead has been under the consideration of the School Board for London, to make more specific provision for wastrel children of the metropolis. The subject was further considered at the Board held December 5. The notice of motion was:—"1. That, as an experiment, a few temporary free schools be established in the metropolis for the admission (*a*) of children who for various reasons are unfit to associate with other children, and (*b*) for children who do not bring their school pence to the neighbouring schools; 2. That, as far as possible, the management of these schools be entrusted to person who have had experience in the management of Ragged Schools; 3. That it be referred to the Statistical, the Works, and the School Management Committees to carry out the above resolutions."

The form of the motion was not considered in accordance with the requirements of the Act of Parliament, and accordingly was remoulded, and in its new form was strenuously opposed, because (*a*) the districts for such schools were not specified; (*b*) because it had not been proved to the Department that poverty existed in specified localities so as to make free schools necessary; (*c*) because the motion did not go far enough;

hence an amendment to memorialise Parliament for power to establish free schools beyond the powers now given in the 26th Section of the Education Act, 1870. Some held aloof from motion and amendment because England was not ripe to adopt the free-school system of America. The result was that motion and amendment were both negatived by twenty-six to three.

It is a serious question whether the class of children which, to some extent, the Ragged Day Schools educate, but the whole of which the operations of the London School Board prevent their including in their work, are provided for in the schools of the London School Board.

In the minds of certain theorists on education, the mention of ragged children or gutter children is like a red flag before a bull. A friend of the writer at the commencement of the operations of the Board once said to one of these gentlemen, "I suppose that you intend to provide a superior class Ragged School?" "Ragged School!" he replied, with a look of ineffable scorn; "we intend to get the whole of the education of London into our power." It is unquestionably true that a School Board does not exist only for the education of gutter children. The duties of a School Board are two-fold—first, to supply lack of school provision, and, with the consent of the Education Department, to build schools. Secondly, to make and enforce by-laws so as to drive children into efficient schools.

But these duties clearly indicate the obligation of providing schools for ragged children, if such children unhappily exist. A School Board fails in its *raison d'être* if it does not accomplish this object. Its members stamp themselves as men of incapacity if they permit themselves to be beaten by the difficulties of the situation. A School Board has enormous powers. It holds in its hands a purse, which, for three years at any rate, is inexhaustible. It will be backed by the mighty power of public opinion so long as it is seen to be grappling in earnest with its duties. It has a large army of officials in its service. Everything, in fact, which can be given to enable it to accomplish its work has been entrusted to it by the legislature. If it fail in accomplishing its task, it can only be for the reason that the obstacles which meet its efforts are invincible, or because it does not bring sufficient wisdom and energy to the work.

Now let us see how the London School Board has succeeded in fulfilling its task.

The number of the school population of London must be the first object in our investigation.

The number of children between three and thirteen requiring elementary education in 1871 was 574,693. For the seven years

which have now nearly elapsed since that time we must add at least 40,000. This makes a number at the present time of 614,693 children between the ages of three and thirteen belonging to the classes for which elementary education has to be provided. Now what account can the London School Board give of these 614,693 children, for whose education it is responsible?

The average number of children on the roll of efficient schools for the half-year ended midsummer, 1877, was 408,861; receiving instruction at home, 3,015; number on the roll of non-efficient schools, 31,884, making a total of 443,760; number wholly exempt under by-law iv., 453; number permanently disabled, 2,571. Total, 446,784.

Now it will be observed that the difference between this figure and the 614,693 for whom, according to the census, account should be rendered is enormous. It is 167,909, an appalling figure if it really represents the ignorance of London. But it must be remembered that a large proportion of this number is composed of children between the ages of three and five, and that the expression, the average number on the roll, is a somewhat ambiguous expression, because average represents the mean between excess and deficiency, and a larger number of children must be reckoned as being on the roll than are comprised in the average number on the roll.

Nevertheless, if we make very large deductions from this ignorance-representing figure 167,909, even if we halve it, a very large number of children are left whose education is neglected.

Now it is reasonable to inquire, to what class do these children belong? Can it be supposed that they belong to the more industrious, the more thrifty, sections of the working classes. When education by the action of the London School Board has been brought to the very doors of the dwellings of the working man, can we imagine that he wilfully is neglecting it? If he is doing so, he lays himself open to a serious charge which his advocates will not be able to rebut. If he is not neglecting it, then his children's names must be on the rolls of schools. Either the figures of the Board are incorrect, in which case the Board cannot escape the imputation of incapacity, because statistics are an important element in the calculations of a Board charged with the duty of educating a vast population, or the children of working men are not on the rolls of the London schools, in which case both they and the Board officers are to blame. Or, as we think more likely, this *residuum* belongs to a lower stratum, a stratum which unhappily exists in all large towns. A mournful fact to which we cannot blind our eyes, and which no tall talk about the rights of man, or the natural equality of human beings, can alter; but yet a fact which a School Board is

bound to face, and if possible to conquer, by supplying schools, or at any rate by co-operating with those who are supplying schools, of a character suited to the especial capacity and condition of those with whom it has to deal.

Now we are by no means prepared to say that the London School Board has made no provision for the poorest children. The Board has provided schools, the fees of which are on a very low scale. It has its penny and its twopenny schools.

Under ordinary circumstances it will be thought that every child could afford to bring its penny; but very often there are four or five little children belonging to one family who should be at school and schooling means, not a charge of one penny a week, but a charge of fourpence or fivepence. The Board, indeed, exercises the power of remitting fees, but the power is somewhat long and tedious, necessitating much application and much inquiry, and it is to be feared that often, while this power is going on, the education of the child is being neglected.

A serious evil exists which all true lovers of education will desire to see remedied. It is to be remembered that all the low-feed schools of the Board are legally open to all comers. The writer has known an instance where a foreman, in receipt of £2 a week, sent his child to a Board School, where the fee was only one penny. He did so in all good faith. The Board School was the nearest school to his residence. He had the right to send his child there. He could not have paid more even if he had wished to do so. The same person afterwards sent his child to a British School, where the fee was sixpence. He had removed from the neighbourhood of the Board School. He was just as willing to pay the sixpence in the British School as he had been to pay the penny in the Board School. Whether the Board is justified, at the expense of the rate-payers, in giving a costly education to the children of parents who can afford to pay for it themselves, is a question which we will not now discuss. That is a question which is extraneous to our argument. It must be borne in mind that the Board provides schools according to strict statistical requirements. Existing accommodation in efficient voluntary schools must be taken into calculation, so that we must assume that in every neighbourhood there is sufficient accommodation and no more for the children requiring elementary education. This accommodation is to be found in Voluntary Schools, where fees are comparatively high, and in Board Schools where the fees are low.

Now it is clear that if parents who can afford to pay the high fees send their children to the schools of low fees, then the children

of parents who cannot afford to pay the high fees must be excluded *from all schools*. There will be no school for them to go to. The indigent parent sends his child to the penny Board School. There is no place for it there, because the child of the foreman, who will willingly pay sixpence a week for his child's education, has occupied it. It is only necessary to study the Board's own statistics to see that this result must arise under the present system.

The accommodation in Board Schools is for 161,218 children. The average number on the roll of Board Schools is 160,506; in other words, the Board Schools are full.

The accommodation in Voluntary Schools is for 285,205. The average number on the roll of Voluntary Schools is stated to be 248,355. This would give in the Voluntary Schools as many as 36,850 vacant places. There are in reality many more vacant places than these. But that, again, is not a point for us to discuss here. The fact that the Board Schools are full, and the Voluntary Schools far from full, shows that there must be some children excluded from the schools of the low fees. For if urged that none could afford to pay the higher fee, the point that we are insisting on remains the same —that a vast number of children must be out of school altogether.

It is often urged that the crowded state of Board Schools proves their popularity and excellence. We do not desire to impugn either the one or the other; but we would just observe that a baker's shop, where the fourpenny loaf was sold at twopence, would be a very popular baker's shop, crowded with customers; but inasmuch as the number of loaves is limited, complaint might justly be made that the twopenny loaves that were sold to people who ought to have paid fourpence went to the wrong people, and that many poor people would be starved in consequence.

Now let it be observed that the Board, in laying down varying scales of fees in different schools, asserts the principle, that payment for education by parents should be made according to their means. The well-to-do artisan should pay his sixpence a week; the very poor man, who can afford nothing, should pay nothing. But the Board must be careful that the child of the poor is not excluded altogether from school in favour of the child of the comparatively rich. If this process be going on in the schools of the London School Board, it is time for the Board to consider carefully the necessities of that large class for which the Ragged Schools endeavoured to provide. It is bound to provide in some way for this class. If it is not doing so, it is not fulfilling the designs of those who created it. A system of national education leaves no individual in the nation without the opportunities of education.

J. J. C.

"BREAD AND WATER."

Reading and Writing

(John vi. 35, &c.)

In the "Fountain" of November 29, 1877, is a sermon by Dr. Parker, remarkable for its simplicity and for its pathos. Bread and water are, thank God, common things; but the Doctor's object is to show that their commonness is not a defect, but an excellence; that their very excellence has occasioned their commonness; and their commonness corresponds to a common want in the constitution of mankind!

In the second paragraph the preacher refers to the prodigious art of the high cook that delighted Babylonian gluttons and made Egyptian *gourmands* smack their sensual lips; but those dishes are forgotten delights, pasteboards that perished in the fire; but bread and water come steadily along the ages, over the graves of empires and the ashes of royalty!

Our object is not to give the sermon, or even a *résumé* of it, but, for the benefit of our teachers, with a view to thoroughness in their work of primary education, we extract in full the third paragraph:—

"Well, the application of this is obvious in higher spheres of life—such, for example, as the culture and satisfaction of the intellect. Reading and writing are the bread and water of the mind. Give a child the power of reading and writing, and let him do the rest for himself; it is worth doing (at least some of it), and let him find it out, and he will value it the more. Your duty is done in giving the reading and the writing, the intellectual bread and water. But the fine cookery is imitated in fine intelligence, and with like results in some cases, namely, mental indigestion and ill-health. Hence we have imperfect French, caricatured German, and murdered music, and the native tongue and the native history are passed by as quite secondary, if not beneath contempt. It is better to chatter French in a way which nobody can understand than to speak good, plain, exact English, is it not? We must be fine at all costs. We must have a few knick-knacks on the mantel-piece, even if we have not a bed to sleep on. We must be able to say, *Parlez-vous Français*, even if we cannot pay our debts. When will people learn to prize bread and water? When will they see that it is better to know a little well, than to know next to nothing about a good deal? Oh, when? This is not a little matter, it is a matter of great importance, from the fact that it is an index of character. I do not laugh at a man whose learning ends at the multiplication table, but I may laugh with grim amusement at a man who speaks hotel French

and then spells October with a *h*. Give your children intellectual bread and water without grudging—that is to say, give them a thorough grounding in the beginnings and elements of knowledge, and let them do the rest for themselves."

The fourth paragraph gives the pith of the sermon, and the preacher's exalted object in delivering it, and we extract it to excite the desire to read the whole :—

"These illustrations prepare the way for the highest truth of all, namely, that Jesus Christ is the bread and water without which we cannot live. He never says He is a high delicacy, a rare luxury, a feast which the rich alone can afford. He says that He is bread and water ; He likens himself not to luxuries, but to the necessaries of life, and in so doing He shows a wisdom, a reach of mind, a grasp of human nature, which should save Him from the attacks of malignant men. An adventurer would not have seen in metaphors so humble a philosophy so profound. Adventurers like big words and glaring figures ; they speak great swelling words of vanity ; they search heaven and earth for effective figures ; they disdain the sling and the stone. Not so with Jesus Christ ; He is bread, He is water, He is light, He is the door, He is the shepherd, and those words, so simple, stretch their meaning around the whole circle of human life, and by their choice alone is the supreme wisdom of Jesus Christ abundantly attested."

PAUPER CHILDREN IN WORKHOUSES.

In the *Contemporary Review* (December, 1877) there is a very valuable paper on "Pauper Children," by Mr. Francis Peek. He advocates the enactment of a measure to prohibit the training of children in the same building with adult paupers, and to provide for their being brought up exclusively in District Schools, or in grouped Village Homes, on the Mettray plan, or by the boarding-out system, individually, under regular supervision. He shows that the latter system is universally adopted in Scotland, where it works admirably in its moral, sanitary, and economical results, as described by Mr. John Skelton, in his interesting work on "The Boarding-out System in Scotland" (published by Blackwood). In that part of the nation pauper children are well brought up for less than £12 per annum each, whereas in English workhouses they cost about £15, and in District Schools from £16 to £30 each. Mr. Peek describes the workhouse as being "the last home of the drunkard whose drunkenness has brought him to premature decay ; the refuge of the tramp who can tramp no longer; and of the abandoned woman, whom dissipation

and disease have driven from the very streets; in a word, the cesspool into which drain the dregs of our population." Is this a proper place to train the young and helpless wards of the State? Yet of the 45,000 pauper children in England and Wales, only 5,600 are in district schools, and less than 3,000 are boarded out. Mr. Peek quotes from the description of workhouse life given by an habitual visitor of those establishments:—"The nurses were to be pitied, living in an atmosphere of disease day and night, doing work which they hated, for bare food and clothing, their only hope an occasional day out to get tipsy. The assortment of strange bedfellows in a workhouse ward is such as poverty and the Poor Law can alone bring together. Men in convict-looking clothing are sitting on the sides of the beds; faces are amongst them on which one dare not look again. Strong bad men are dying here after lives of sin and shame—wild animals tracked to their lair, dying savage to the last. Children are here. The little pale boy of ten years old has been two years in that bed. A burglar is in one bed. In the next is a boy of sixteen, with an innocent face." Is it any wonder, then, that so many of the children, trained amid such horrible associaions, afterwards become ruined criminals? And then the State pays £30 for each in prison, or £19 in a reformatory. Whereas by a better training at an earlier period, and removal from adult paupers, these young persons might, at much less expense, have been rendered useful members of the community, especially by the Village Home and Boarding-out systems. As to the objection sometimes urged against the latter—that it is difficult to find, at least in England, suitable cottage homes for the children, or to secure effectual supervision for them, Mr. Peek remarks truly—"This objection has not been sustained by experience, which shows that wherever the system has been fairly tried, and wherever real efforts have been made to obtain them, both homes and proper supervision have been forthcoming."

EDITOR'S PORTFOLIO.

A "Ragged School on the Sea"—A New Training Ship.—The *Clio*, a screw frigate, given by the Admiralty as an industrial training ship for North Wales, Chester, and the border counties, and which is moored in the Menai Straits off Bangor, was lately inaugurated by the Duke of Westminister, chairman of the Executive Committee. His Grace alluded to the great necessity existing for such a vessel, which was dedicated to training poor and destitute children as seamen, and pointed out that the Committee were putting into practice the late Canon Kingsley's suggestion, that there should be *ragged schools on the*

sea as well as on the land. The dedicatory prayer was offered by the Bishop of Bangor. Among those present were the Duchess of Westminster, Lady Beatrice Grosvenor, Lord Ronald Gower, Lord and Lady Penrhyn, Sir Richard and Lady Bulkeley, the Dean of Bangor and St. Asaph's, Major Platt, High Sheriff of Carnarvonshire, Mr. Whalley, M.P., Mr. Richard Davies, M.P., Mr. Bulkeley, and Mr. Hughes. A bazaar was held on board, and during the afternoon the vessel was visited by 3,000 persons.

TEMPORARY ASYLUM FOR POOR CHILDREN.—Sir,—May I ask in your pages London clergymen to mention to me the names of any poor children who, from insufficient food or bad dwellings, would be likely to derive especial benefit from a few weeks' country air? I should be very glad to help any such by giving them a fortnight's country life here if their parents or any one else can pay some small part of the expenses. I ask this because I do not wish to weaken proper feeling of independence, and because some kind of selection is necessary. But in an extreme case I am quite willing to take children entirely free of cost to the parents. I have had several children during the last three months, and all have gone home greatly improved in health.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant, W. ROSSITER.—Halstead, Sevenoaks, Kent, Sept. 25, 1877.—*Record*, September 28th, 1877.

Notices of Meetings.

WENTWORTH STREET.

The eighteenth annual meeting was held at the residence of the treasurer, A. Ayshford, Esq., George Williams, Esq., in the chair, who said: If the husbandman properly cultivates his field he gets his crop. There is seed-time and harvest-time in the natural world and in the spiritual world. As the husbandman scatters his seed and afterwards reaps, so the teachers engaged in the dissemination of God's Word bury their teachings, and are certain to have their reward. As an illustration, he mentioned that the teachers of a Ragged School in St. Giles's, after much opposition, persuaded a razor-grinder—one of the inhabitants of the low lodging-houses of that neighbourhood—to permit his son to attend their school. The lad proved an attentive scholar, and, having been brought to a knowledge of salvation, became a teacher, then a preacher, and subsequently being sent to college was ordained, in the presence of the old razor-grinder and his wife, pastor of a church of 1,000 members. The work of Ragged School teachers reminded him of the divers who descend to the bottom of the sea to pick up pearls—and as air is necessary to the life of the diver, so is the grace of God necessary to

the spiritual life of the Christian worker. He described the costly buidings and appointments of the Sunday Schools in America, from whence he had recently returned, and explained the system of national lessons in use there. In conclusion, he urged those present to look up to the Lord for strength to carry on the great work in which they were engaged, summing up their duty and their reward in the text, "Be not weary in well-doing; for in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not."

The Hon. Secretary read the report. Soup had been given during the winter months. There was a Drum-and-fife Band, a Penny Bank, and a Library of 230 volumes, in connection with the schools. Prizes had been awarded to five girls for keeping their situations for twelve months and upwards; two boys had also received prizes for good conduct. The Ladies' Working Society had done much good by the distribution of articles of clothing. The attendance was as follows:—Day School, 62; week-night, 36 boys, 24 girls; Sunday evening, 85 boys, 90 girls.

The Treasurer's acount was read, and showed a total expenditure of £193 9s. 10½d., to meet which there was an income from all sources of £187 17s. 6½d., and a balance due to treasurer of £5 12s. 4d.

The meeting was addressed by Messrs. Brooks, Collinson, Curtis, and Earle.

BARKING RAGGED SCHOOL.

The annual meeting was held in the Congregational Schoolrooms on November 15th, when, owing to the inclement weather, the attendance was somewhat affected.

The proceedings, however, were of a very encouraging character, and commenced with singing and prayer.

The chairman, D. H. Fry, Esq., of Plasket, offered some general introductory remarks, expressing his deep interest in the movement, and a hope that the meeting would prove, both financially and otherwise, a decided success.

Mr. W. Bewers then gave some particulars of the past year's working, in the course of which he stated they now had two schools occupied regularly for Sunday evening teaching, both being fully attended, and that the effort could be still further extended if funds and workers were forthcoming. He presented a financial statement showing that the past year's expenditure had amounted to £26, and that there was now due to the treasurer the sum of £3 0s. 4d.

The Rev. R. C. Billing, Vicar of Holy Trinity, Islington, addressed the audience, gave most interesting particulars of his own experience in this department of Christian work, congratulated the workers on the success of their extended efforts, and concluded his remarks by an earnest appeal for practical help.

Mr. Burnett Tabrum, of the Ragged School Union Committee, followed with some details of his experience, which were listened to with deep attention, and gave some useful practical hints to those immediately engaged in the work.

Short addresses were also delivered by Revs. W. J. Tomkins (Baptist) and J. Smedmore (Congregationalist), and after very hearty votes of thanks had been tendered to chairman and speakers, the proceedings terminated with singing and prayer.

A collection made at the doors realised just sufficient to clear the debt, but left nothing for the future working expenses of the schools.

POPLAR.

The annual meeting of this school, which is situated opposite the main entrance to the East India Docks, in the East India Road, was held in the schoolroom of Trinity Chapel. Henry Green, Esq., presided.

After prayer, the secretary, Mr. Gretton, read the report of the year's work, which, among other things, stated the school had been carried on for 21 years; that every Sunday evening a school had been held with an average attendance of 200 children and 18 teachers; that the Penny Bank, which was established in the school in 1860, has upon its books 622 depositors, with 4,374 deposits, amounting to £250; that every Wednesday evening a Band of Hope was held in the schools; from October to May an Evening School was in operation three nights in each week, with an average attendance of 37 scholars, who were taught by one paid master and four voluntary teachers, the expenses of which have been defrayed by Henry Green, Esq., and the Ragged School Union; that needy cases which have come under the observation of the teachers have been relieved by gifts of money and clothing; that at Christmas 230 scholars were provided with a free tea and entertainment; that in July the children were taken on an excursion to High Beach; and that on many evenings entertainments of a suitable character were given to the scholars. The report also appealed for additional teachers.

The Chairman then addressed the meeting, strongly urging upon those present to come forward and help in the work. He said he had often asked clergymen how it came about that at the present time, when we have more churches than ever, we have in the streets a greater amount of ruffianly conduct. He thought it was a disgrace to us as a Christian people. In no country in the world would you see that which you witness in our streets. He thought it was becoming more and more a scandal to London.

The Chairman was followed by Mr. Curtis, of the Ragged School Union. "This is an age," he said, "lacking in reverence." He thought one cause of it was the spread of knowledge; children have been taught to know more than their parents; the parents have been overproud of their children; the children have drawn contrasts between their own knowledge and their parents' ignorance, and have at length usurped the position of their elders. Another cause, he thought, was the increase of employment for young people, with better wages. The youth had more money at their disposal than they ought to have, but without the exercise of proper control; in fact they were better fed than taught. Another cause of this indifference and lack of reverence, he thought, was that Christian people considered that religion consisted in attending Divine service, whilst utterly ignoring those who are in need of Christian teaching, such as those who were in this Ragged School. Atheism must be conquered by practical Christianity. He was delighted to know that there was not only a Sunday Evening School, but a Week Evening School as well connected with this association, and he urgently appealed to those present to step forward and join hands with those who are engaged in this glorious work.

The meeting was then addressed by the Rev. James Chadburn. Ever

since he came to London he said he had been strongly impressed with the great need there is to lay hold of the rising generation, and it must be done by organisations such as the Poplar Ragged School. Although he liked to have large congregations at Divine service, yet he was willing to dispense with every one of his young men and women if they would go into Ragged Schools or other similar organisations. There is a great need for the kind of work they had at heart. City missionaries told him that in the streets around us the life that is lived is unspeakable in its vileness. After adverting to the scenes to be witnessed in Barking Road on a Sunday evening during the summer, he concluded by earnestly inviting those present who were not otherwise engaged, to give themselves to the work of teaching in these schools, either on Sunday or week evenings, where their services are so greatly needed.

The pleasure of the evening was greatly enhanced by the singing of some sacred pieces by members of the East London Evangelistic Choir, who have added so much to the attraction of the Gospel Services held in the Trinity schoolroom on Sunday evenings during the past year.

TESTIMONIAL TO MRS. DENHAM, COTTAGE PLACE SCHOOL.

This school was founded in the year 1848. A committee of gentlemen took into consideration the neglected condition of the children of the neighbourhood of Pedlar's Acre, near Waterloo Bridge, engaged the services of a schoolmaster, and opened a school for the gratuitous education of the poor of the neighbourhood in the lower portion of the Infirmary in the Waterloo Road.

For nearly thirty years the school continued its course through varying circumstances, under the management of several local friends interested in the welfare of their poorer neighbours, among whom stand prominent Mr. Lewis and Dixon, Esq. It was conducted in different buildings, all in the same locality, and has been the means of advancing the interests of many generations of scholars resident at the south end of Waterloo Bridge. On the retirement of Mr. Dixon, the committee of the Centenary Educational Fund took the school under its auspices, and continued it till last autumn, when it became absorbed in the School Board scheme.

The closing of the school was an event which could not be allowed to pass without some recognition of the past services of Mrs. Denham, who had for fifteen years directed her energies to the spiritual, temporal, and moral improvement of her scholars. It was arranged by the scholars, their parents and friends, that there should be a farewell meeting, where all who appreciated Mrs. Denham's exertions might take part in valedictory proceedings.

The 6th of September was the evening fixed upon, when a tea of a substantial character was provided.

After tea the meeting took place. Mr. Allen presided. There were about 150 persons present. Proceedings commenced by the chairman reading a portion of Holy Scripture, offering prayer, and the singing of hymns.

The Chairman, in a few pithy and kind remarks, pointed out the cares and anxieties of a teacher, and applied his remarks to the exertions of Mrs. Denham. He then, on the part of the scholars and their parents,

presented Mrs. Denham with a handsome marble timepiece, also a porcelain tea service and a pair of table mats. This he did in appropriate terms, and the gift was suitably acknowledged.

After a few parting words from Mr. Lewis, some pieces sung, and recitations given, the meeting was brought to a close by a short address and prayer by Mr. Wheeler, every one being highly gratified with the meeting and entertainment, but all regretted the cause of its being held.

CHEQUER ALLEY, ST. LUKE'S.

A public meeting, in support of the Hope Mission, Chequer Alley, was held in the City Temple under the presidency of the Rev. Dr. Parker. Mr. Lord read the report which showed that the Mission's work was carried forward principally among the poor who live in the neighbourhood of Chequer Alley. The Mission allows grants of clothes to the very poor; assists poor costermongers in their calling; and provides entertainments, and excursions in the summer. It also engages in general evangelistic work, and endeavours to raise the people in the scale of morality.

Dr. Parker pleaded the cause of the Mission, and asked that so worthy and Christian a work might receive the ample support of the meeting.

Dr. Morley Punshon, in moving the adoption of the report, said there was in the Mission the recognition of a great many great principles of which they all needed to be reminded of in this age of fantastic deceit. It dealt with the material comforts of the poor, and there could be no question about the appeal made on behalf of the society. God had taught us universal brotherhood, and none could succour broken hearts more than those who realised, day after day, the unutterable happiness of home. There was an underlying humanity everywhere, which told us that God had made men to be brothers; and Christians should let their sympathy go out after their poorer brethren.

The resolution was seconded by the Rev. J. De Kewer Williams in a very humourous speech. A collection was then made, and amounted to £23 12s. The second resolution, which referred to the operations carried out by the committee, and their beneficial effects on the people of the locality, was moved by the Rev. Dr. Raleigh and seconded by R. R. Glover, Esq., J.P.

A vote of thanks to Dr. Parker for presiding, and to the Deacons for the use of the City Temple, was moved by Mr. Whyte, and seconded by Professor Leoni Levi, F.R.G.S., which closed the proceedings.

GRAVESEND.

The twenty-ninth annual meeting was held in the Assembly Rooms, Gravesend, November 27. The Mayor of Gravesend was in the chair, and said he found that among the first duties of the mayor of this borough was to take the chair at the Ragged School meeting, and no sooner was he ensconced in his office, hardly before he had breathing time, Mr. Penman, their secretary, waited upon him to preside at that meeting. He told him that he should be pleased to do so, and he could now assure them that it gave him great satisfaction to take the chair that evening. He had watched the working of the institution, and his father before him had

been connected with the building of the school. The object for which the institution was originally started might have somewhat changed, but he saw by the report of last year that there were at present one hundred children or infants, who were too young to go to the Board school, still receiving instruction.

Mr. Penman, before reading the report, said that he had received from J. M. Knight, Esq., of Northfleet, with his usual practical kindness, a cheque for £5. The report proceeded to give detail of the work engaged in for the past twenty-five years of its existence. In 1857 the late Mr. Jesse Crook joined the committee, and threw such an amount of energy into the work, that speedily the present very commodious building was erected. The committee had now to report a very heavy balance against the institution, and the Day School, its chief item of expenditure, will be given up at Christmas. The committee felt that they could not sever that connection of so many years' standing with Miss Mark without an expression of regret. They feel "she hath done what she could," patiently and perseveringly, and they believe that many old scholars have to thank God for the presence so long with us of the gentle, kind, and loving Miss Mark. The Sunday School was the original work of the institution, and now that there had been organised a vast and comprehensive system of secular education, there still remained the same need for the institution to continue that religious training which the State very wisely did not attempt to give. Teachers are much wanted; the attendance has been, in the summer months, 58 in the afternoon and 82 in the evening; in the winter months, 85 in the afternoon, and 130 in the evening. The Bible-woman has been constantly engaged during the year. The total number of hours engaged was 1,163, visits paid 2,634. She reported much sickness during the year, and several deaths. The young friends belonging to the Windmill Street Sunday School Dorcas Meeting have again presented the Mission with forty articles of useful clothing for distribution among the poor. The Children's Aid Fund still continued to afford relief to any who were sick. Four boys and girls attended at Exeter Hall in May to receive a prize given by the Ragged School Union. The Night Schools were successfully carried on during the winter months, for youths and boys over School Board age. At the Mothers' Meetings on Monday evenings 146 articles of clothing were made, and £13 18s. 8½d. paid in weekly pence. At Tuesday evening meetings 306 garments were made, and £28 15s. 1d. paid. The Parents' Meeting was held on the 20th February, when 130 men and women partook of a substantial tea, after which a meeting was held. 823 tickets were issued for the Christmas dinner, and after the holders were supplied the large room was twice filled with tramps and others, who feasted off the remainder. The total amount of subscriptions was £85 5s. 7d., and the expenditure £82 3s. 7d. The report concluded by asking for increased support.

The resolutions were all unanimously carried after addresses by Mr. Curtis and Rev. G. M. Murphy, both of London, and Rev. N. Heath, Rev. G. L. Herman, and Messrs. Cooper, Rayner, Gould, and Elkins.